

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1233
INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

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BEIRUT PASS USINT BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IR, IZ, SY, UR
SUBJ: SADDAM HUSSEIN'S TRAVELS

1. DURING DISCUSSION OF DEVELOPMENTS IN RELATIONS BETWEEN IRAQ AND IRAN (SEPTEL, REZA GHASSEMI, CHIEF OF MFA'S 1ST POLIT DIVISION, WAS ASKED WHAT GOI EXPECTED FROM SADDAM HUSSEIN'S VISIT TO IRAN APRIL 29 TO MAY 1. GHASSEMI REPLIED IT WOULD BE ANOTHER IN EXCHANGE OF VISITS CALLED FOR AT ALGIERS SUMMIT AS PART OF GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS. PREVIOUS GOODWILL VISITS WERE PAID BY IRAQI FONMIN HAMMADI TO IRAN MARCH 15-17 AND BY PRIMIN HOVEYDA TO IRAQ MARCH 26-29. DISCUSSIONS WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN WILL INCLUDE WHOLE RANGE OF BI-LATERAL ISSUES REMAINING AFTER MARCH ACCORD IS FULLY IMPLEMENTED. IRAN IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN EXPANDED CONSULAR RELATIONS WHICH WOULD FACILITATE TRAVEL TO SHIA SHRINES IN IRAQ BY IRANIANS WHO HAVE BEEN DENIED RIGHT TO MAKE PILGRIMAGE FOR MANY YEARS.

2. GHASSEMI'S EVALUATION OF SADDAM HUSSEIN'S TRIP TO MOSCOW
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CONFIRMED SEVERAL ASSUMPTIONS CONTAINED MOSCOW 5443. HE

THOUGHT MAIN PURPOSE OF TRIP HAD BEEN TO REASSURE SOVIETS
THAT IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH IRAN HAD NOT DIMINISHED IMPORTANCE
OF IRAQ'S SOVIET TIES. ACCORDING TO GHASSEMI, SOVIETS HAD
NOT WANTED ANY MENTION AT ALL OF IRAN/IRAQ ACCORD IN FINAL
COMMUNIQUE BUT SADDAM HUSSEIN HAD INSISTED ON AT LEAST TOKEN
REFERENCE TO IT. IRAQI LEADER MAY ALSO HAVE SOUGHT SOVIET
SUPPORT AGAINST SYRIA IN EUPHRATES WATER DISPUTE, USING
ARGUEMENT THAT USSR HAD CONTRIBUTED TO PROBLEM BY BUILDING DAM
FOR SYRIANS. GHASSEMI SAID SADDAM HUSSEIN HAD BEEN VERY
UPSET BY KOSYGIN'S DINNER REMARK THAT USSR HAD "GREAT
SYMPATHY" FOR KURDS AND HAD SUCCESSFULLY INSISTED THAT ALL
MENTION OF KURDISH PROBLEM BE KEPT OUT OF COMMUNIQUE. IRANIAN
GOVT DOES NOT KNOW WHAT IS CONTAINED IN AGREEMENT ON PEACEFUL
USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY BUT IS TRYING TO FIND OUT. GHASSEMI
THOUGHT NEITHER IT NOR CONSULAR CONVENTION WAS PARTICULARLY
SIGNIFICANT BUT WERE SIGNED IN ORDER TO HAVE SOME CONCRETE
ACCOMPLISHMENT TO COVER WHAT WAS FROM ALL ACCOUNTS A PRETTY
TESTY VISIT.

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